



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

**PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701  
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## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

### **PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION**

**1. Project Title:** Mission Valley Shooting Club

**2. Type of Proposed Action:**

Construct the following:

- Pistol Range Roof & Slab
- Pavilion & Storage Space
- 22 Rimfire Range House Addition
- Safety Berms

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:**

The Mission Valley Shooting Club is located 3.5 miles west of Ronan and 12 miles south of Polson, in Lake County Montana. The range is just north of Round Butte Road and west of Leighton Road. The shooting club property is leased from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Nation in Pablo, MT. It consists of a tract of land located in the E1/2SE1/4NE1/4, and the South 800 feet of the E1/2NE1/4NE1/4, of Section 33, T21N, R20W, P.M.M. and contains approximately 20 acres more or less. See Map 1 for approximate location to Ronan, MT.



## Map 1 – Mission Valley Shooting Club, Ronan, MT

**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

*(a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*

*(ii) May not limit the number of members;*

*(iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*

*(iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*

*(b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

### **5. Need for the Action(s):**

- The 200 and 300 yard target backstops are potentially exposed to errant bullets from the pistol and 22 rimfire ranges. A safety berm is needed along the 300 yard target stands to eliminate hazard.
- There is a need for an all weather road to the 200 and 300 yard target stands for handicapped shooters and for maintenance access.
- There is no protection from the sun or inclement weather on the pistol firing line. Protection is needed.
- There is a need for a protected warming area for youth events and for scoring sanctioned shoots in the .22 rimfire area.
- There is not over head protection for general archery administrative, pre-shoot meetings, instruction, etc. at the archery area.

### **6. Objectives for the Action(s):**

- Improve safety in the 200 and 300 yard target area, by building safety berm along 300 yard target stands
- Build an all weather road to 200 and 300 yard target stands for handicapped shooters and maintenance access.
- Cover the pistol range firing line for sunny and inclement weather protection.
- Add a room to the 22 Rimfire Range House for instructional and warming area.
- Cover pavilion at the archery area for weather protection and as administrative and operations during shoots.

### **7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:**

The proposed improvements are a much small area than the total acreage and will be safely spread within the leased properties.

### **8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):**

The area affected is the existing Mission Valley Shooting Club, which has been in place for approximately 13 years. The historic and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing and the existing shooting range. Miller Coulee runs north to south about 75 yards from the west end of the proposed range site. Although Miller Coulee has flow year round, predominantly from irrigation run off, there are no delineated wetlands on the site. (See Map 1). There are inhabited residences adjacent to both the north and south property lines.

**9. Description of Project:**

- Add a new safety berm separating the 300 yard rifle range from a pistol and 22 rimfire ranges.
- Add an all weather road to the 200 and 300 yard target stands, with added asphalt at culvert crossing for soil stability and erosion control.
- Cover the pistol range firing line
- Add a room to the 22 Rimfire Range House; a 16'X16' concrete slab an enclosed unfinished room.
- Cover pavilion at the archery area on existing 16'X30' slab.

**10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**  
None

**(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
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N/A

**Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$21,038.87

**11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:** The Mission Valley Shooting range is a membership fee range, with daily range and visitor fees. Local law enforcement agencies, primarily the St. Ignatius Police Department, Tribal Police and "Tribal Game Wardens, generally use the range several times a year for qualifications and training. The local Cowboy action shooting club holds events approximately 3 times per year. Additionally there are USRA IR 50/50 Rimfire shoots, IBS Format Centerfire Shoots, and Centerfire Varmint Shoots. Hunter Education classes also use the range for training at least twice a year at no charge. It is anticipated that the new improvements in the .22 rimfire and archery facilities will increase both Hunter Education, Bow Hunter Education, 4-H and Boy Scout activities at these areas.

**12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:** Proposed range improvements proposals have been discussed within the membership of the club, the associated project vendors, contractors, and Tribal authorities.

**13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Natural Resource Department of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

**14. Names, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Tom Fieber, 808 7<sup>th</sup> Street East, Polson, MT 59860, (406) 250-3386

**15. Other Pertinent Information:** N/A

## **PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES**

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project). Safety and access improvements on 200 and 300 yard ranges, and protective shelters and covers in the pistol, rimfire and archery areas.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without improvements proposed.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** for safety and access improvements on the 200 and 300 yard ranges, and protective shelters and covers in the pistol, rimfire and archery areas.

The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not fund the improvements and the range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

**Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**

NONE

**List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):** None

### **PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas.

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**2. & 5.** There are no delineated wetlands on the property, but a creek (Miller Coulee) that runs north to south through the range. Miller Coulee has water the year around, mostly from irrigation run-off. Proposed all weather access road to the 200 yard and 300 yard target stands would include asphalt at the culvert crossing to protect the crossing from erosion.

**9.** This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

<b>Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Can Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comments Below</b>
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				<b>X</b>		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				<b>X</b>		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				<b>X</b>		
4. Agricultural production				<b>X</b>		<b>#4</b>
5. Human health				<b>X</b>		<b>#5</b>
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				<b>X</b>		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				<b>X</b>		<b>#7</b>
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				<b>X</b>		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				<b>X</b>		<b>#9</b>
10. Demands for government services				<b>X</b>		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				<b>X</b>		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**4.** The surrounding land ownership is private and the range is leased from a private party through the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. Past and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing.

**5.** Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large. The range is fenced with No Trespassing signs and access is through a locked gate.

**7.** Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting.

**9.** The nearest neighbors to the range are adjacent on the north and south boundaries. Additional inhabited residences are East 1/3 Mile and West ½ Mile.

## **PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range/alterd areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The Mission Valley Shooting Club's proposed alternative, to provide a safe regulated shooting opportunity is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Para. 9.

## **PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** NO

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

### **Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore an EIS is not required.

## **PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

### **Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

Tom Fieber, 808 7<sup>th</sup> Street East, Polson, MT 59860

MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

Craig Pablo, Natural Resources, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

### **EA prepared by:**

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MS Wildlife Management

Ecological Assessments

Helena, MT 59602

**Date Completed:** July 23, 2011

Amended by FWP on August 30, 2011

### **Describe public involvement, if any:**

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's website and through a legal ad in the Valley Journal announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.